



General Assembly

**Substitute Bill No. 6949**

January Session, 2005

\* HB06949F IN 051705 \*

**AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL READINESS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 10-16p of the general  
2 statutes are repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof  
3 (*Effective July 1, 2005*):

4 (a) As used in sections 10-16o to [10-16r] 10-16s, inclusive, as  
5 amended by this act, 10-16u, 17b-749a, as amended by this act, and  
6 17b-749c, as amended by this act:

7 (1) "School readiness program" means a nonsectarian program that  
8 (A) meets the standards set by the department pursuant to subsection  
9 (b) of this section and the requirements of section 10-16q, as amended  
10 by this act, and (B) provides a developmentally appropriate learning  
11 experience of not less than four hundred fifty hours and one hundred  
12 eighty days for eligible children, except as provided in subsection (d)  
13 of [said] section 10-16q;

14 (2) "Eligible children" means children three and four years of age  
15 and children five years of age who are not eligible to enroll in school  
16 pursuant to section 10-15c, or who are eligible to enroll in school and  
17 will attend a school readiness program pursuant to section 10-16t;

18 (3) "Priority school" means a school in which forty per cent or more

19 of the lunches served are served to students who are eligible for free or  
20 reduced price lunches pursuant to federal law and regulations,  
21 excluding such a school located in a priority school district pursuant to  
22 section 10-266p or in a former priority school district receiving a grant  
23 pursuant to subsection (c) of this section and, on and after July 1, 2001,  
24 excluding such a school in a transitional school district receiving a  
25 grant pursuant to section 10-16u;

26 (4) "Severe need school" means a school in a priority school district  
27 pursuant to section 10-266p or in a former priority school district in  
28 which forty per cent or more of the lunches served are served to  
29 students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches;

30 (5) "Accredited" means accredited by the National Association for  
31 the Education of Young Children, a Head Start on-site program review  
32 instrument or a successor instrument pursuant to federal regulations,  
33 or otherwise meeting such criteria as may be established by the  
34 commissioner, in consultation with the Commissioner of Social  
35 Services;

36 (6) "Year-round" means fifty weeks per year, except as provided in  
37 subsection (d) of section 10-16q;

38 (7) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Education; [and]

39 (8) "Department" means the Department of Education; and

40 (9) "Transition to school" means a planned system of collaboration  
41 and communication among preschool and kindergarten teachers,  
42 families and schools, developed by school principals in conjunction  
43 with a local or regional school readiness council and kindergarten  
44 teachers (A) to facilitate students' successful passage from school  
45 readiness programs to kindergarten classes, and (B) to ensure that  
46 social, cognitive and literacy gains that children make in school  
47 readiness programs are sustained and expanded in kindergarten.

48 (b) The Department of Education shall be the lead agency for school

49 readiness. For purposes of this section and section 10-16u, school  
50 readiness program providers eligible for funding from the Department  
51 of Education shall include local and regional boards of education,  
52 regional educational service centers, family resource centers and  
53 providers of child day care centers, as defined in section 19a-77, Head  
54 Start programs, preschool programs and other programs that meet  
55 such standards established by the Commissioner of Education. The  
56 department shall establish standards for school readiness programs.  
57 The standards may include, but need not be limited to, guidelines for  
58 staff-child interactions, curriculum content, including preliteracy  
59 development, lesson plans, parent involvement, staff qualifications  
60 and training, transition to school and administration. The department  
61 shall develop age-appropriate developmental skills and goals for  
62 children attending such programs. The commissioner, in consultation  
63 with the Commissioners of Higher Education and Social Services and  
64 other appropriate entities, shall develop a continuing education  
65 training program for the staff of school readiness programs. For  
66 purposes of this section, [on and after July 1, 2004] until June 30, 2012,  
67 "staff qualifications" means there is in each classroom an individual  
68 who has at least the following: (1) A credential issued by an  
69 organization approved by the Commissioner of Education and nine  
70 credits or more, and on and after July 1, 2005, twelve credits or more,  
71 in early childhood education or child development from an institution  
72 of higher education accredited by the Board of Governors of Higher  
73 Education or regionally accredited; (2) an associate's degree with nine  
74 credits or more, and on and after July 1, 2005, twelve credits or more,  
75 in early childhood education or child development from such an  
76 institution; (3) a four-year degree with nine credits or more, and on  
77 and after July 1, 2005, twelve credits or more, in early childhood  
78 education or child development from such an institution; or (4)  
79 certification pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early  
80 childhood education or special education, and on and after July 1,  
81 2012, "staff qualifications" means each classroom is headed by a  
82 teacher who has at least the following: (A) A bachelor's degree in early  
83 childhood education or childhood development, or in a related field

84 approved by the Commissioner of Education; or (B) certification  
85 pursuant to section 10-145b with an endorsement in early childhood  
86 education or special education.

87 Sec. 2. Section 10-16r of the general statutes is repealed and the  
88 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2005*):

89 (a) A town seeking to apply for a grant pursuant to subsection (c) of  
90 section 10-16p or section 10-16u shall convene a local school readiness  
91 council or shall establish a regional school readiness council pursuant  
92 to subsection (c) of this section. Any other town may convene such a  
93 council. The chief elected official of the town or, in the case of a  
94 regional school district, the chief elected officials of the towns in the  
95 school district and the superintendent of schools for the school district  
96 shall jointly appoint and convene such council. Each school readiness  
97 council shall be composed of: (1) The chief elected official, or the  
98 official's designee; (2) the superintendent of schools, or a management  
99 level staff person as the superintendent's designee; (3) parents; (4)  
100 representatives from local programs such as Head Start, family  
101 resource centers, nonprofit and for-profit child day care centers, group  
102 day care homes, prekindergarten and nursery schools, and family day  
103 care home providers; [and] (5) a representative from a health care  
104 provider in the community; and (6) other representatives from the  
105 community who provide services to children. The chief elected official  
106 shall designate the chairperson of the school readiness council.

107 (b) The local school readiness council shall: (1) Make  
108 recommendations to the chief elected official and the superintendent of  
109 schools on issues relating to school readiness, including any  
110 applications for grants pursuant to sections 10-16p, as amended by this  
111 act, 10-16u, 17b-749a, as amended by this act, and 17b-749c, as  
112 amended by this act; (2) foster partnerships among providers of school  
113 readiness programs; (3) assist in the identification of (A) the need for  
114 school readiness programs and the number of children not being  
115 served by such a program, [and] (B) health, safety and learning needs  
116 for children from birth to five years of age, and available services to

117 meet those needs, and (C) for priority school districts pursuant to  
118 section 10-266p, the number of children not being served by such a  
119 program and the estimated operating cost of providing universal  
120 school readiness to eligible children in such districts who are not being  
121 served; (4) submit biannual reports to the Department of Education on  
122 the number and location of school readiness spaces, estimates of future  
123 needs, and the factors identified pursuant to subdivision (3) of this  
124 subsection; (5) cooperate with the department in any program  
125 evaluation and, on and after July 1, 2000, use measures developed  
126 pursuant to section 10-16s for purposes of evaluating the effectiveness  
127 of school readiness programs; (6) identify existing and prospective  
128 resources and services available to children and families; (7) facilitate  
129 the coordination of the delivery of services to children and families,  
130 including (A) referral procedures, and (B) before and after-school child  
131 care for children attending kindergarten programs; (8) exchange  
132 information with other councils, the community and organizations  
133 serving the needs of children and families; (9) make recommendations  
134 to school officials concerning transition from school readiness  
135 programs to kindergarten; [and] (10) encourage public participation;  
136 and (11) communicate all recommendations and decisions made  
137 pursuant to this section to the local or regional board of education and  
138 the municipal legislative body.

139 (c) Two or more towns or school districts and appropriate  
140 representatives of groups or entities interested in early childhood  
141 education in a region may establish a regional school readiness  
142 council. If a priority school is located in at least one of such school  
143 districts, the regional school readiness council may apply for a grant  
144 pursuant to subsection (d) of section 10-16p. The regional school  
145 readiness council may perform the duties outlined in subdivisions (2)  
146 to [(10)] (12), inclusive, of subsection (b) of this section.

147 Sec. 3. Section 10-16s of the general statutes is repealed and the  
148 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2005*):

149 (a) The Commissioners of Education and Social Services shall

150 develop an agreement with the Early Childhood Education Cabinet to  
151 define the duties and responsibilities of their departments concerning  
152 school readiness programs. The commissioners shall consult with  
153 other affected state agencies. The agreement shall include, but not be  
154 limited to, a multiyear interagency agreement to establish and  
155 implement an integrated school readiness plan. Functions to be  
156 described and responsibilities to be undertaken by the two  
157 departments shall be delineated in the agreement.

158 (b) There shall be an Early Childhood Education Cabinet to  
159 maximize good outcomes for children from birth to five years of age,  
160 inclusive, in health, safety and learning. The cabinet shall consist of the  
161 Governor, the Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management, the  
162 Commissioners of Education, Social Services, Higher Education, Public  
163 Health, Children and Families and Mental Retardation, the  
164 cochairpersons of each of the joint standing committees of the General  
165 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to education and  
166 human services and the select committee having cognizance of matters  
167 relating to children, the executive directors of the Children's Trust  
168 Fund, the Commission on Children, the Connecticut Health and  
169 Educational Facilities Authority and the Office of Workforce  
170 Competitiveness, or their designees, and three persons representing a  
171 local or regional school readiness council appointed jointly by the  
172 cochairpersons of the joint standing committee of the General  
173 Assembly having cognizance of matters related to education. Of the  
174 three school readiness council representatives, one shall represent a  
175 council in a small priority school district, one shall represent a council  
176 in a medium-sized priority school district and one shall represent a  
177 council in a large priority school district. The cabinet shall be chaired  
178 by the Governor or the Governor's designee.

179 [(b)] (c) On or before January 1, 2000, the commissioners shall adopt  
180 assessment measures for use by school readiness programs in  
181 conducting their annual evaluations pursuant to section 10-16q, as  
182 amended by this act. The commissioners may adopt the assessment  
183 measures used for Head Start programs.

184     (d) The Department of Education, within available appropriations,  
185     shall be the lead agency for the conducting of a state-wide longitudinal  
186     evaluation of the school readiness program, in consultation with the  
187     Department of Social Services and the Early Childhood Education  
188     Cabinet.

189     Sec. 4. Subsection (c) of section 17b-749a of the general statutes is  
190     repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
191     *1, 2005*):

192     (c) The Commissioners of Social Services and Education shall: (1)  
193     Coordinate the development of a range of alternative programs to  
194     meet the needs of all children, including children from birth to three  
195     years of age, inclusive; (2) foster partnerships between school districts  
196     and private organizations; (3) provide information and assistance to  
197     parents in selecting an appropriate school readiness program; and (4)  
198     work to ensure, to the extent possible, that school readiness programs  
199     allow open enrollment for all children and allow families receiving  
200     benefits for such a program to choose a public or accredited private  
201     program.

202     Sec. 5. Subsection (c) of section 17b-749c of the general statutes is  
203     repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
204     *1, 2005*):

205     (c) The grants shall be used to:

206     (1) Help providers who are not accredited by the National  
207     Association for the Education of Young Children to obtain such  
208     accreditation;

209     (2) Help directors and administrators to obtain training;

210     (3) Provide comprehensive advice and services, such as enhanced  
211     access to health care, a health consultant, a mental health consultant,  
212     nutrition, family support services, parent education, literacy and  
213     parental involvement, and community and home outreach programs;

214 and provide information concerning access when needed to a speech  
215 and language therapist;

216 (4) Purchase educational equipment;

217 (5) Provide scholarships for [training to obtain a child development  
218 associate certificate] career ladder advancement;

219 (6) Provide training for persons who are mentor teachers, as defined  
220 in federal regulations for the Head Start program, and provide a  
221 family service coordinator or a family service worker as such positions  
222 are defined in such federal regulations;

223 (7) Repair fire, health and safety problems in existing facilities and  
224 conduct minor remodeling to comply with the Americans with  
225 Disabilities Act; train child care providers on injury and illness  
226 prevention; and achieve compliance with national safety standards;

227 (8) Create a supportive network with family day care homes and  
228 other providers of infant or toddler care;

229 (9) Provide for educational consultation and staff development;

230 (10) Provide for program quality assurance personnel;

231 (11) Provide technical assistance services to enable providers to  
232 develop child care facilities pursuant to sections 17b-749g, 17b-749h  
233 and 17b-749i, as amended by this act; [or]

234 (12) Establish a single point of entry system;

235 (13) Provide services that enhance the quality of programs to  
236 maximize the health, safety and learning of children from birth to three  
237 years of age, inclusive, including, but not limited to, those children  
238 served by informal child care arrangements. Such grants may be used  
239 for the improvement of staff to child ratios and interaction, initiatives  
240 to promote staff retention, preliteracy development, parent  
241 involvement, curriculum content and lesson plans; or



242     (14) Provide multidisciplinary training and intervention necessary  
243     to assist preschool children, infants, toddlers and their families with  
244     behavioral health difficulties to be continuously engaged in the  
245     learning process and to avoid future school suspension.

246     Sec. 6. Subsection (c) of section 10a-194h of the general statutes is  
247     repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
248     *1, 2005*):

249     (c) Participating qualified nonprofit organizations may borrow  
250     money from the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities  
251     Authority for any preschool project for which the authority is  
252     authorized to make loans pursuant to this section. In connection with  
253     such borrowing, participating qualified nonprofit organizations may  
254     enter into any loan or other agreement and make such covenants,  
255     representations and indemnities as such participating qualified  
256     nonprofit organization deems necessary or desirable to obtain such  
257     loans from the authority or to facilitate the issue of bonds by the  
258     authority to finance such loans, including agreements with providers  
259     of letters of credit, insurance or other credit facilities for such  
260     financings. The Department of Education, in consultation with the  
261     Department of Social Services and the Connecticut Health and  
262     Educational Facilities Authority, shall establish priorities for financing  
263     facilities based on need and quality determinants. Selection of child  
264     care facilities for such financing shall be reviewed and approved by the  
265     local or regional school readiness council before such financing is  
266     approved.

267     Sec. 7. Subsection (e) of section 10-285a of the general statutes is  
268     repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
269     *1, 2005*):

270     (e) If an elementary school building project for a new building or for  
271     the expansion of an existing building includes space for a school  
272     readiness program, the percentage determined pursuant to this section  
273     shall be increased by five percentage points, but shall not exceed one

274 hundred per cent, for the portion of the building used primarily for  
275 such purpose. Recipient districts shall maintain full-day preschool  
276 enrollment for at least ten years.

277 Sec. 8. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2005*) (a) The Commissioner of  
278 Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of Social Services,  
279 shall, within available appropriations, develop and implement a plan  
280 for the delivery of multidisciplinary consultation services for licensed  
281 child care providers and school readiness programs. Such  
282 multidisciplinary consultative system shall include the areas of  
283 education, mental health and health, and shall serve settings including  
284 community-based, public school-based and home-based providers.  
285 The consultation shall include child-specific and program-level  
286 services.

287 (b) The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the  
288 Commissioner of Social Services, shall provide grants for health and  
289 mental health consultation with an integrated or multidisciplinary  
290 approach to assist local or regional school readiness councils in  
291 providing such consultation to school readiness programs funded  
292 pursuant to section 10-16p of the general statutes, as amended by this  
293 act.

294 Sec. 9. Subsection (h) of section 10-285a of the general statutes is  
295 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
296 *1, 2005*):

297 (h) Subject to the provisions of section 10-285d, if an elementary  
298 school building project for a school in a priority school district or for a  
299 priority school is necessary in order to offer a full-day kindergarten  
300 program or to reduce class size pursuant to section 10-265f, the  
301 percentage determined pursuant to this section shall be increased by  
302 ten percentage points for the portion of the building used primarily for  
303 such full-day kindergarten program or such reduced size classes, and  
304 (1) in the case of a priority school, shall be increased by an additional  
305 twenty percentage points, but shall not exceed ninety per cent in total,

306 for the portion of a building used primarily for such full-day  
307 kindergarten program and a full-day preschool program, provided the  
308 recipient district agrees to maintain both the full-day kindergarten and  
309 full-day preschool programs in the school for at least ten years, and (2)  
310 in the case of a priority school district, shall be increased by an  
311 additional twenty percentage points, but shall not exceed ninety-five  
312 per cent in total, for the portion of a building used primarily for such  
313 full-day kindergarten program at a severe need school and a full-day  
314 preschool program, provided the recipient district agrees to maintain  
315 both the full-day kindergarten and full-day preschool programs in the  
316 school for at least ten years.

317       Sec. 10. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2005*) Any entity receiving state  
318 funds for early education shall follow student outcome measures and  
319 program standards determined by the Department of Education, in  
320 consultation with the Department of Social Services.

321       Sec. 11. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2005*) (a) There shall be a home  
322 visitation program to promote wellness and school readiness, and to  
323 prevent developmental delays, by assisting families in gaining access  
324 to needed educational, social, medical and other services. The home  
325 visitation program shall be administered by the Children's Trust Fund,  
326 in consultation with the Departments of Education and Social Services.

327       (b) The home visitation program established pursuant to subsection  
328 (a) of this section shall provide (1) case management services to  
329 families with pregnant women or with children from birth to five years  
330 of age who reside in priority school districts and who are eligible for  
331 the Medicaid program, and (2) training of informal care providers  
332 serving any such children during the first year of their care, within  
333 available appropriations.

334       (c) Case management services provided to families pursuant to this  
335 section shall include, but not be limited to, parent education, parenting  
336 skills training, assistance in securing education, housing, employment  
337 and social services, and other home visitation services.

338 (d) Training of informal care providers provided pursuant to this  
 339 section shall include child development stages, safety, use of libraries,  
 340 preliteracy, nutrition, food resources such as farmers' markets,  
 341 program eligibility and access, or other related issues.

342 (e) Not later than July 1, 2005, the Department of Social Services, in  
 343 consultation with the Children's Trust Fund and the Department of  
 344 Education, shall submit to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid  
 345 Services an amendment to the state Medicaid plan required by Title  
 346 XIX of the Social Security Act to provide for federal reimbursement of  
 347 services provided pursuant to this section.

348 Sec. 12. Section 10-155e of the general statutes is repealed and the  
 349 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2005*):

350 The Board of Governors of Higher Education, with the advice and  
 351 assistance of the constituent units of the state system of higher  
 352 education and such private institutions of higher education as elect to  
 353 participate after notice thereof, shall develop programs for persons  
 354 employed in the public schools and school readiness programs  
 355 established pursuant to sections 10-16p to 10-16s, inclusive, as  
 356 amended by this act, 10-16u and 17b-749a, as amended by this act, as  
 357 paraprofessionals, to assist such paraprofessionals to fulfill state  
 358 teacher certification requirements. [Said Board of Governors of Higher  
 359 Education shall report its findings and recommendations to the joint  
 360 standing committee on education of the General Assembly on or  
 361 before February 1, 1974.]

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	10-16p(a) and (b)
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	10-16r
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	10-16s
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	17b-749a(c)
Sec. 5	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	17b-749c(c)
Sec. 6	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	10a-194h(c)

Sec. 7	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	10-285a(e)
Sec. 8	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	New section
Sec. 9	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	10-285a(h)
Sec. 10	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	New section
Sec. 11	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	New section
Sec. 12	<i>July 1, 2005</i>	10-155e

<i><b>ED</b></i>	<i><b>Joint Favorable Subst. C/R</b></i>	<i><b>APP</b></i>
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**APP**      *Joint Favorable Subst.-LCO*

**FIN**      *Joint Favorable*